

JUNE 1952 (Calif.)
MERCURY

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00149R000100580003-8

Circ.: m. 53,100
\$. 87,061

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Date:

BUT SOME GUERRILLAS ARE ACTIVE

Cloak-and-Dagger Silence Over Red China Spy Intrigue

CPYRGHT

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TOKYO (INS) — One gray night last summer six strong young men, free Chinese and Korean paddled silently along the coast of the China mainland looking for a rendezvous.

They were just off the Shantung peninsula, across the Yellow Sea from South Korea.

As they snaked their rubber boats to shore—they had two boats with three men in each—they were seen by a Communist shore policeman who rang an alarm.

The youngsters made a fight of it. But within minutes, three of them were killed and the other three seized as "spies."

This, at any rate, is how Peiping Radio describes an unsuccessful "sabotage raid" on the Red mainland.

The six men were carrying ultra-shortwave radios, pistols, electric torches and forged identities, the Communists insisted.

Just this week the Reds sentenced the three survivors before some 1,600 "witnesses" near Tsingtao. One of the three men got off with a one-year sentence for "good behavior."

The implication was clear—he had squealed. The Communist version is that the six were hired by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency in Tokyo, trained as espionage-sabotage agents and put near shore.

Five days later—that is, last Tuesday—the Communists announced the fruit of their Shantung Beach capture:

The regime had "convicted" a big, organized ring in Tsingtao that was allegedly preparing to overthrow the government by military force.

The Communists said the whole plot was financed with American dollars. And that this wasn't the first time

All this sounds like the usual Communist propaganda one might say. Where is the proof? There is none, of course. For years the communists have been charging that American-trained Chinese spies have been swarming in by land, sea and air.

In their way, the communist cries might give some American taxpayers satisfaction that the secret budget of the Central Intelligence agencies spotted around Asia maintain grim-lipped silence.

Most American CIA agents are not identifiable in their niches in embassies, consulates, military establishments or positions as free-lance newsmen. They will never admit their positions.

Below the high-class CIA level are some American organs so amateurish that they are easily spotted by persons of average perception. But they, too, maintain silence of mainland operations—if indeed they actually exist.

The Chinese Nationalists, who are supposed to be furnishing the manpower for these intrusions, similarly will not officially admit they are engaged in espionage.

A few weeks ago I asked a Nationalist official somewhat naively if he had any comment on the communist charges.

"Come on, now," I said. "If you are bothering the communists as much as they claim, you might as well take credit for it."

He winked slyly. "One never admits of espionage and sabotage. You must draw your own conclusions."

A few days later American pilot Henry Bush told a story of how he flew several hundred miles into Red China, made a split-second rendezvous at an airstrip with mainlanders who handed over a small Chinese boy to be flown to freedom. Bush said he didn't think it was

exceptional—people were flying into China all the time, he said, on similar deals.

This is borne out by non-official sources in Hong Kong and Macao, the natural take-off points for torays like Bush's.

The Communists claim that most "American-financed" agents are dropped in by air after takeoffs from Formosa. The Nationalists, who consider themselves at war with the Communists, admit proudly to their reconnaissance missions in the face of the enemy's jet interceptor squadrons.

"Communist defense patrols are spread pretty thin in some areas," an Air Force officer explained. "And when you go in low with a C46 you ordinarily can avoid radar detection."

The Nationalists also publicize their guerrilla raids, conducted for purely military intelligence or to hit a particularly soft spot on the China coast. The last figures released, for example, told of 131 guerrilla raids against Chinese positions in 1955.

Some of these "guerrillas" stay on the mainland for as long as a month, contacting what Nationalist China's President Chiang Kai-shek once claimed to be a force of "one million" guerrillas holding out all over China.

The dropping of "agents" that the Communists have publicized most involve two American civilians, John Thomas Downey of New Britain, Conn., and Richard George Fecteau of Lynn, Mass. Both are serving long terms in Chinese Communist prisons.

Downey and Fecteau were captured with an Air Force crew of 11 men about B29 was shot down while the leaflet dropping mission over North Korea in 1950, the Korean War.

The Communists held the 11 flyers for 32 months, claiming they had purposely invaded mainland skies.

They also claim to have wrung confessions from the two civilians that they were dropping shortwave radios to established agents on the mainland. U.S. efforts to free Downey and Fecteau have been fruitless.